

ATTRACTING & RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

Attracting Volunteers to your Organisation

- List 'what's in it for the volunteer' - it maybe a reference, something to add to their CV, training, meeting new people, personal satisfaction, helping a cause they believe in or learning new skills - spell it out so they know what they can get out of helping your organisation.
- If you have benefits or particulars to your organisation that provide an added benefit - then tell them in your advertisement. E.g. reimbursements for travel expenses, monthly get-togethers for staff and volunteers etc.
- Think creatively about your volunteer roles - divide tasks into 'projects' and think about which tasks could be done by a team of volunteers.
- Be flexible about the timing of involvement - some people may need to regularly change the day that they help to fit in with their other commitments. Remember, many people are juggling work, study and family so may need to adjust their volunteering hours as their commitments change.
- Look for shorter commitment - more project-based tasks.
- Make it easy for people to get involved - Minimise the screening/induction process. Invite the volunteer in so that you can meet them and tell them more about the position - if you are happy that they can perform the role and they are still interested in helping you - then set a time for them to start.
- Make your job description sound interesting - Don't start a gardening position description with "Weeding" start it with "Enjoy the Outdoors!"
- Don't forget to check that your Volunteer Insurance policy.
- Involve volunteers in evaluating the program to improve and develop it.

Retaining Volunteers

- Show appreciation and recognise of volunteers - value their contribution.
- Give feedback and seek and listen to feedback
- Give volunteers ownership/responsibility of a particular project - give them leadership/decision-making opportunities
- Provide on-the-job training
- Provide clear job descriptions
- Enable your volunteers to have input into the planning phase
- Allow your volunteers to develop their roles in areas that are of particular interest to them
- Include them as part of your team - ensure they meet everyone and feel welcome
- Introduce volunteers to each other - foster relationships
- People make mistakes, and so can volunteers! Don't undercut your volunteer's confidence - look at mistakes as learning exercises.
- Be flexible - ensure your volunteers know that you are prepared to adjust their volunteer work to suit their schedules.

What Discourages Volunteers

- Poor organisation of the task, orientation within the organisation or supervision of the volunteer
- Unsatisfying jobs
- Unclear job tasks
- Being talked down to
- Lack of feedback
- Lack of recognition